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ABSTRACT

One hundred and nine suggestions for classroom activities are presented in this booklet. The suggestions are listed in paragraphs generally two to three sentences long. Two example suggestions are the following: (1) demonstrate details of various jobs by having students answer riddles describing characteristics of specific jobs they have studied; have students make up their own riddles for the following day; and (2) ask students who have part-time jobs to address the class concerning their job experiences and emphasize such things as responsibilities, problems, and values imparted by the work; encourage discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work in high school as an aid to making career decisions. (JH)

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Ideas for classroom activities in Career Education

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INTRODUCTION

M. Ellen T. Ellison

The basic thesis assumed in the compilation of this booklet is that career education, like any other changing form and function of schooling, will blossom, or die, based primarily on the efforts, skills, and philosophies of the elementary, middle, and secondary classroom teachers. Thus, this booklet, an assimilation of ideas originating with classroom teachers, has been produced as a supplement to the programmed package of orientation materials. Its specific purpose is to provide the practicing teacher with suggested ideas for classroom activities which emanate from a career education approach.

Each "lesson capsule" presented in the booklet is obviously merely a suggestion. Each teacher should feel totally free to introduce the activity in any way he/she deems appropriate, to modify (i.e., deleting or expanding) it according to individual lesson plans, and to terminate it at any attractive point of emphasis.

Have a school counselor address the class on elective courses available to juniors and seniors. The counselor and the class should be prepared to discuss the relationship and importance of various electives to occupations being considered by students in the class.

Invite community members in diverse occupations to hold a panel discussion with the class on the effects their jobs have had on their physical and mental health. Ask students to take notes for a follow-up discussion of this aspect of career choice.

Define general education and discuss how this broad academic training is a valuable foundation for future specialized training. Prepare a class bulletin board showing how liberal arts courses are related to specific specialized courses and careers.

Instruct students to analyze four sample scenarios in which they must make decisions based on their own sense of values and past experience. Have each student write an explanatory paragraph examining the reasons for the decision.

Lead a discussion of parental influence on students' occupational interests. Discuss parents' attitudes toward their own careers as well as their suggestions for their children's occupations.

Have students choose persons after whom they would like to pattern their own lives. Have each student describe the person's lifestyle and work. Ask the students to analyze the features they found particularly attractive.

Discuss with the class various personal disadvantages associated with occupations, such as: extensive travel (or lack of it), public exposure (or lack of it), low social prestige, etc. Discuss how each factor could interfere with some desired lifestyle.

NOTES

Hold a class discussion on the importance of leisure time. Have individuals research various local jobs as to usual working hours, vacation time, and other free time. Allow students to report their findings to the class as a whole.

Involve the students in a mock court procedure, allowing them to volunteer to play the judge, lawyer, policeman, coroner, doctor, newspaper reporter, newspaper editor, jury, clerk, court reporter, matron, guard, artist, plaintiff, and defendent. Divide the class into groups, according to their interest areas, allowing one group to invent the crime. (Take the students to a real trial, if possible.)

Have students bring their favorite recordings to share with the class. In discussion, explore student knowledge and ideas about how such recordings are produced. Suggest that they select a recording and explore its history in detail. Or, play an especially thought provoking yet "mod" recording and elicit the students' reactions.

Have the students draw self portraits and write a poem to accompany the drawing.

Have a tasting party for the students. Blindfold them and allow them to smell, feel, and taste the "unusual" foods (like chocolate covered ants).

Decorate a large cardboard box so that it resembles a mailbox. The box should be large enough to fit over a child, reaching to the knees. Cut a hole at eye-level and a "mail slot" at waist level. Help each child select a store or other place of business to represent. The "businesses" write letters requesting products or services from each other. The letters are collected and distributed by the "mailbox" who may also ask such questions as: What do you do here? Do you like your job? Why? To whom are you writing?

NOTES

Cut out pictures from old magazines that illustrate a variety of careers. Use the pictures to decorate paper bags large enough to fit over one's head. The outside of a bag is decorated with illustrations of jobs the child likes, the inside with jobs the child dislikes. The dislikes are "secrets" that may be kept that way or shared with friends by temporarily exchanging bags. Encourage students to exchange bags, perhaps by offering one of your own, and promote class discussion of the career choices represented.

Organize a group project of your preference. As the project develops, discuss with class how cooperation, sharing, willingness to work, etc., have made the project progressive and pleasant. Point out instances of rivalry, aggression, and pettiness and guide students to an awareness of how this hinders progress.

Discuss workers who service a home and have students think of ways these people affect their lives. These jobs include postman, installation people, repairmen, delivery people, pest control people, etc.

Discuss job families using construction as an example. Show pictures of houses and buildings and have students name various types of skilled workers who helped build these structures.

Set aside a period of time in which each student develops a booklet on himself or herself with pages headed "Things I like to do," "Things I love," "My family," "My pets," "My friends."

Have students write a page on how they've changed (progressed) since kindergarten (or some other suitable reference point). Direct them to consider new skills, growth and experiences.

Have students keep individual health charts on which they record completion of good grooming practices under such headings as: brushing teeth, washing hands, trimming nails, bathing, combing hair. Some procedures are recorded daily, others as needed. Discuss importance of each procedure.

NOTES

Conduct a class discussion to compile a list of reasons why people may become unemployed. Also, make a list of causes of marginal employment and those economic factors beyond individual control which affect employment.

Lead class discussion of ways in which each member depends on some other person. Have each student also describe ways in which other people depend on him. What would be the consequences of an irresponsible attitude on either part?

Invite working members of the community to address the class. Ask them to discuss their own reasons for working. They should also discuss advantages and disadvantages associated with their chosen occupations. Equal time might be given to retired members of the community.

Demonstrate the end result of work by discussing with the class which workers produce familiar goods and services. Use filmstrips or pictures to illustrate a few examples in detail.

Discuss social services required by a complex society such as police protection, postal service, and fire protection. Point out how these needs create jobs. Given a specific social need, have students identify jobs created by that need.

Show how businesses can affect students' lives by discussing specific local businesses. Discuss how many business practices such as the creation of suburban shopping malls can affect students' lifestyles.

Take a class poll to determine which jobs (any number you have time for) are of greatest current interest to the students. Have study groups research educational needs associated with each job. Or, have study groups interview persons employed in these jobs.

NOTES

After assigning homework for the next class meeting give students the opportunity to decide whether or not they will do some portion of the assignment. Students should prepare to discuss the reasons for their choices in the following class. Compare results of the decisions with the students' reasons for making them.

Hold class discussion on decisions students make each day, such as: when to come in from play, how to clean their own room, how to spend leisure time, etc. Discuss reasoning behind individual decisions. Have students contrast reasoning processes leading to "good" and "bad" decisions.

Demonstrate details of various jobs by having students answer riddles describing characteristics of specific jobs they have studied. Have students make up their own riddles for the following day.

Choose three jobs in the community and have students write paragraphs on the importance of each job. Have students discuss how their own lives would change if one of the occupations was not filled.

Illustrate differences in production of services as compared to the production of goods by showing pictures of various workers on the job. Have students identify whether goods or services are being produced in each case. After discussion, have students draw illustrations of the production of goods and the production of services.

Demonstrate how leisure and work activities may be interchangeable by using examples such as commercial fishing/family fishing trip or textbook reading/magazine reading. After analyzing the distinction, discuss how workers may choose vocations based on their avocations. Illustrate hobbies that may grow into businesses.

NOTES

Adapt the television show "What's My Line?" Allow several students to bring the equipment necessary to dress like those people who work in different occupations.

Dividing the students into small groups ("families"), give them advertisements from two different grocery stores. Allowing them a ten dollar budget, have them plan a meal, realizing that the same item can be sold at different prices, according to the individual store.

Solicit names of pen pals for the students.

Have the students plan and conduct a foreign wedding ceremony (Spanish, French, etc.). Ask them to volunteer for the different roles, i.e., bridal couple, in-laws, attendants, minister, catering service staff, printers (invitations), etc.

Read a story, play, or poem aloud to the students (or give them printed copies) and omit the ending allowing each one to write his own.

Pose a situation such as the following: A mother is offered a full-time job that will provide the family with substantial and needed income. The job is the kind the mother would really enjoy doing. Before she accepts the job, however, the mother decides to talk it over with her family. She knows she will not be able to do the job unless the family is supportive. Ask small groups to role play the reaction that might arise in a family conference concerning benefits and problems.

Urge interested students to design and construct devices that might be developed in the future or to describe new techniques dealing with problem situations. Suggest that they plan to lead the class in group discussion about the need for those invented devices or techniques and their impact on society.

NOTES

Have a classroom trade fair. Allow students to bring items they no longer want or need to class where they will display them. They may make or accept offers to trade their goods to others for something they want. No money may be used.

Arrange a field trip to a class in an area vocational school. If possible, assign each child to a student "instructor" who is a member of the vocational class. Besides seeing how the machines work, the class should be prepared to discuss the kinds of jobs requiring each skill being learned. The student "instructors" may have many answers to the career-related questions of the class.

In a class discussion develop a list of activities which may be approached as vocations or avocations. Discuss possible advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Invite pairs of guests to speak on each activity. Have each guest explain his or her own choice of a vocational or avocational aspect of the activity.

Have each student create a "me" box by covering a large cardboard box with pictures, sketches, and slogans that represent some significant aspect of his personality, daily activities, and general lifestyle. Suggest that one face of the cube be used for representation of imagined future career and leisure-time activities.

Utilize role playing to demonstrate polite behavior in response to social situations. Contrast courteous with discourteous responses in such activities as sharing of equipment, waiting one's turn, conversation and greetings.

Describe how various people contribute to the well-being of students. Contrast the value system implied by skill assessment as opposed to philosophical concepts of individual worth to society.

NOTES

Discuss considerate use of public facilities, including towel dispenser, commode, and water faucets. Apply this consideration for public property and fellow citizens to the student's own area in the classroom. Demonstrate and emphasize proper clean-up techniques for the classroom.

Offer class time for students to tell the class about their individual hobbies or interests. Students may be encouraged to bring their craftwork to show, demonstrate dance steps, play musical instruments or describe camping or scouting trips.

Identify factors contributing to physical differences among people. Discuss ways in which different people might react to the same academic situation. Encourage individuals to discuss their own physical and mental limitations and how they have changed during the past two or three years.

In a class discussion compile a list of motor skills. Have each student divide the list into those in which the student excels, those in which improvement is desired, and those which a student feels are particularly lacking in himself or herself.

Have the class compile a list of essential public services in your community. Discuss the ways these services are provided. Compare the advantages of public administration of essential services versus private enterprise.

Have the class compile two lists of occupations: one of jobs common to South Carolina or to the local community, the other of jobs not locally available. Discuss probable reasons for the lack of demand for occupations on the second list.

Ask the class for interpretations of the following phrase: "I really couldn't fail to disagree with you less" or a similar ambiguity. Encourage personal anecdotes of communicative failures. Help class distinguish barriers to personal communication. Differentiate dialect and slang.

NOTES

Place a large map of the State or other geographic areas on a bulletin board or other suitable locations. Fill a small fishbowl with slips of paper on which are written the titles of occupations. Students draw occupations from the bowl and attach them in appropriate locations on the map explaining their choice of location for each job.

Show interaction of family life by pictures of family members at work on each of their personal responsibilities to the family unit. Discuss with students the importance of each job and the reason its completion is necessary to successful family living.

Demonstrate importance of a varied job market by pointing out "school helpers" whose jobs make school life run smoothly for the students. Lunchroom personnel, custodians, principal, etc. may be discussed.

Have students write, tell, or draw answers to such open-end sentences as: "I feel angry when ____ " or "I feel glad when____ ." Discuss with each student why certain situations make him or her feel this way.

Ask students to describe themselves orally. Look for accuracy in this description and emphasize positive attitude toward physical characteristics and dress.

Invite a nurse to address the class on hygiene and its importance to physical and mental well-being. Allow ample time for student questions as regards this relationship.

Divide a class in half. Have one group find and bring to class pictures which show abuse of public or private property; the other group should bring pictures of well cared for property. Have each group make a collage of its collection of pictures to show the relative effect on our world of magnified abuse of property as compared with considerate use of property.

NOTES

Conduct class research into local apprenticeship programs. Identify number and type of apprenticeable trades in your area. Arrange for lectures by representatives of local joint (labor-management) apprenticeship committees. Allow class to compare sample copies of local apprenticeship contracts.

Identify local or State facilities for post high school training or education. Discuss programs offered at each. Discuss individual motives involved in students' current preferences or strong dislikes concerning available adult education facilities.

Using local want ads keep a chart of job openings requiring such educational backgrounds as: high school diploma, trade school training, college degrees, etc. Encourage the class to examine their own goals against this indicator of local opportunity.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using various criteria for choosing a career. Possible areas of discussion include salary, location, promotion opportunity and fringe benefits as well as such basic issues as the applicant's aptitude for the work.

Have each student write a detailed description of an imaginary person whom they would consider an ideal "best friend." The description should include aptitudes, interests and a system of social values. Encourage students to voluntarily describe their "best friend" to the class and/or set upon small discussion groups in which students examine the ways in which their ideal "friends" differ from themselves and why.

Divide the class into research groups. Assign one broad academic subject area to each group. Students are to list specific courses covered under their assigned subject area. The courses are to be listed separately under the headings: elementary school, middle school or junior high, high school, college, and trade or technical.

NOTES

Discuss with the class the concept of job prestige. Have the class name some low prestige jobs and discuss the reasons for a job being so considered. Examine individually the necessity for each job. Compare social need with the cost in individual pride. Encourage suggestions for solving the problem.

Using daily stock quotations have the class select stocks to "purchase" with a given amount of money. Half the amount is to be placed in "growth" stocks which may not be sold until the end of the project. The other half is to be used in "daily speculation" with profits and losses noted daily in individual portfolios. At the end of the project, students may compare the relative success or failure of these long-term and short-term investments. ("Money" may be revoked when discipline problems arise.)

Discuss differences between work and play. How is school like work? How is it like play? Why do people work, other than for money? When might a person who needs money refuse to work? Why do we go to school?

Ask individual students to suggest songs for the class to learn. Discuss reasons for individual choice of songs.

Emphasize respect for property by demonstrating and then discussing with the class the correct use and care of textbooks and desks. Contrast the conditions of a new book, a well cared for used book, and an abused book.

Discuss courteous social behavior while shopping. Have students keep records for a short time of discourteous behavior they observe in stores. Combine records to show frequency of occurrence of these discourteous acts. Again hold class discussions of how and why these incidents occur and how they could be avoided.

NOTES

Allow students to read or tell original stories to the next lower grade in your school. The student should tell his or her own class the reason for relating a particular story.

Demonstrate that society's needs give rise to occupations. Compare the standard of living of a pioneer family with that of the class in general. Emphasize leisure time activities, transportation, and education. Have students bring pictures illustrating various lifestyles and choose among these materials to create a bulletin board montage.

Illustrate changes in the job market by having the class name animals whose work functions have been replaced by technology. Apply this observation to occupations which have become obsolete or for which manpower requirements have been greatly reduced.

Emphasize reasons for working by leading students in listing basic social needs for work. Have students find pictures representing such needs as shelter, clothing, food, recreation, helping others, etc. Make a chart or other display illustrating why people work.

Show how verbal skills learned in school may affect job opportunities. Emphasize enunciation, clarity, expressing, and speed. Instruct students to listen to announcers, ministers, and family members. Discuss differences noted in speech patterns. (Using a tape recorder, allow the students to hear and criticize their own voices.)

Choose a student to take the role of leader in a group project. Discuss importance and relative functions of leader and group members. Proceed with assigned project. Lead class discussion on successful (or unsuccessful) outcome of the exercise. Emphasize orderliness, cooperation, seriousness, and attention.

NOTES

Using lunchroom etiquette as an example, discuss advantages of a positive attitude in social situations. Point out, for example, speed with which lunch line moves if students are orderly or relative ease of finding a clean place to eat when students clear their own tables of trays and refuse.

Instruct students to compare the average amount of leisure time found in a foreign country which they are studying with the average amount of leisure time available in the U.S. Have them write a brief paper on the differences. Discuss factors which account for the difference.

Help students make appointments to interview people in a variety of occupations. Ask them to include such questions as why one chose a particular job, what the specific job duties are, how the occupation fills a societal need, and what training is required for the job.

Ask each student to find out from one or both parents what training was required for the jobs they do. Compile the information gathered to make a bulletin board of occupational training.

Practice making change for a dollar by having two students at a time stand before the class. One student gives the price of an item (under a dollar), the other gives the simplest possible change (i.e., the least number of coins necessary). Use cards listing items and prices for the first student to choose from. Emphasize importance of counting change after a purchase. Later, set up a store or tourist attraction and "sell" products the students have made. Give each student a certain amount of "play" money.

Direct the class to think of the last "work" they had to do in which they were interested. Have them write on how they felt while involved in the work and how they felt when the job was completed. Personal satisfaction and achievement derived through work well done may be emphasized by the exercise.

NOTES

Stress the fulfillment of societal needs as a source of occupations through the following exercise: Have each student make a list of basic needs such as shelter, health care, and transportation. Under each the student is to list careers that help meet each need.

Geographical conditions and their relationship to occupations may be illustrated by studying the incidence of types of occupations in each of the geographical regions of South Carolina. A topographical outline map of the State may be utilized, listing occupations in the pertinent areas.

Relate the importance of school subjects to careers by having the students make mobiles. One or two large focal points should illustrate the occupations with attached material representative of related school subject areas.

Describe to the class a situation in which a shopper could not find a desired item in a store. Discuss the following questions: What might the shopper do about this situation? What are some possible reasons the store does not have the item? What might the store do if a great number of shoppers desire to purchase the item? What effects does demand have on the shopkeeper's supplies?

Provide each student with a space outline of a room. Tell the class to pretend that the room and whatever objects they choose to put in it belong to them. Instruct the students to draw and label whatever they would like to have in these rooms. After each student has finished, discuss why certain objects were chosen and why they are important to the home environment.

Guide students who are preparing to choose an occupation to think about their individual skills by having students list skills which they believe they presently have or could develop such as mathematical skills, speaking ability, scientific skills, mechanical or athletic skills, etc. Discuss with students occupational fields in which these skills are necessary, helpful, or unrelated to successful training.

NOTES

Have one student describe another student in the class and instruct the class to guess who is being described. Play several rounds with different students. Discuss with the class how they were able to determine which student was being described.

Encourage the class to use the "brainstorming" technique to answer the question "Why do people work?" Stress use of the imagination in thinking of potential answers to this question. Imaginative handling of this procedure may lead students to decide that the need to work stems from many possible motivations.

Highlight personal needs of man by creating your own diagram (possibly a transparency) illustrating these needs. As the diagram is displayed to the students, lead the class in a discussion of how these needs are met--especially in school life. Possible topics are such needs as: affection, achievement, and understanding.

Divide the class into groups and assign each group an occupation for which they should develop a list of necessary and related skills. Each group should then select a classmate who, in their opinion, best demonstrates those talents and skills required in each occupation.

Choose several students to interview teachers individually on the subject of the kinds of work the teachers have done prior to their present jobs. The influence (or lack of it) of each job on the teaching career should be emphasized. Each interviewer should then report to the class on how various work experiences have influenced the teachers' careers.

Using Volume II of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Second Edition, and local want ads conduct a class project to identify personality traits included in job descriptions. Discuss why such traits may relate to success or failure in a particular job.

NOTES

Hold a class discussion in which individual students tell the class about experiences in which they have used a positive attitude to achieve success. Examples may include such achievements as learning to swim or completion of a first sewing project.

Divide the class into two teams. Instruct each team to choose a biographical work for reading and analysis. Each team is then to present a dramatization of an incident in the life of their subject in which the character used a positive attitude to overcome a difficult situation. Have the class as a whole discuss the incidents and the probable feelings of the subjects.

Invite a college admissions officer to discuss with the class requirements for college entrance. Also invite a representative of a nearby Technical Education Center to address the class on TEC's entrance standards.

Discuss the meaning of the term "lifestyle." Have each student research an occupation which is personally interesting. The students should then write imaginative descriptions of their possible future lifestyles as members of their selected occupations. Students may be encouraged to share these scenarios with the class.

Invite several former graduates of your high school who are now in business to speak to the class on the role continued education has played in their careers. Have students prepare short, written summaries of any speaker's remarks.

Discuss with the class the following personality traits and their importance in getting and holding various jobs: desire to succeed, cooperation, promptness, diplomacy, consideration, honesty, independence, leadership, and the ability to follow instructions.

Assign students a variety of television programs to watch which depict contrasting lifestyles. Instruct students to write descriptions of lifestyles depicted. Hold a class discussion of their findings.

Give the class a list of sports activities, crafts, and hobbies which have earning potential. Ask students to point out careers which could evolve from each leisure-time activity.

Ask students who have part-time jobs to address the class concerning their job experiences. Ask them to emphasize such things as responsibilities, problems, and values imparted by the work. Encourage discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work in high school as an aid to making career decisions.

Assign each student an occupation and have him or her prepare an outline delineating decisions necessary in preparation for entering that occupation. The timing of decisions should also be indicated. Such a sequence of events might include the following: interest aroused, research into job parameters, choice of school subjects related to satisfaction of basic training requirements, etc.

Instruct students to outline education programs based on their current occupational choices. Next, have them use school catalogs and job descriptions to plan a second program. The researched program is to be compared in class discussion with the first, unresearched one.

Have students research the history of labor unions in the U.S. Hold a class discussion on the aims and functions of labor management. Illustrate how organization has furthered both parties.

Have students debate the following topic: Formal apprenticeship is a viable alternative to casual on-the-job training as a skill acquisition method in today's job market.

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The major responsibility for the assimilation of the content of this booklet was assumed by Jesse A. McCall, Jr., Technical Writer, Office of Vocational Education, South Carolina Department of Education.

This pocket has been designed for your convenience. As you discover other ideas for use in your classroom, you can file them here.

Often the discovery of new ideas can stimulate the origin of another. Because we are interested in sharing these ideas among teachers, we invite and encourage you to please send us your suggestions for classroom activities.

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